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SUBJECT: YEMEN: ROYG HUNGRY FOR NEW APPROACH TO FOOD
SECURITY AND SAFETY

REF: STATE 322

¶1. SUMMARY: The ROYG is making the development of a National Food Security Strategy a priority in response to an International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) study indicating that food insecurity has reached alarming levels in Yemen. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) has unveiled new food security work structures, which should more effectively coordinate financial and technical support for food security from the ROYG as well as donors. In addition to food security, food safety appears to be rising on the ROYG's agenda, as the ROYG adopts international standards for monitoring products produced in Yemen and takes action to search for and destroy expired food. END SUMMARY.

ROYG UNVEILS PROPOSED FOOD SECURITY WORK STRUCTURES

¶2. Preliminary results of an International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) study indicate that food insecurity has reached alarming levels in Yemen with respect to the Global Hunger Index (GHI). According to the study, 50 percent of the population is considered "food insecure." Food insecurity is not directly related to poverty. While poverty levels have reached 40.2 percent in rural areas, food insecurity has reached only 29.4 percent. Conversely, in urban areas, while poverty levels are only at 20.7 percent, food insecurity reaches 42.2 percent. With assistance from IFPRI and other donors, the ROYG is developing a Food Security Strategy, which should determine 1) where and who are the food insecure, 2) what are the main determinants of food insecurity, and 3) what are the challenges to and options for improving food security. Khaled Mohammed Saeed, Director General of Agriculture and Fisheries and National Coordinator of the Food Security Program, told donors and EconOff on July 27 that the ROYG is making the development of a National Food Security Strategy a priority and expects to disseminate the final version of the National Food Security Strategy in May 2010.

¶3. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) is revamping the ROYG's approach to food insecurity. In a meeting with donors and EconOff on July 27, Nabil Shaiban, Director General of International Cooperation with Europe and the Americas, unveiled the ROYG's proposed food security work structures. They will include a Food Security Inter-Agency Steering Committee, a Food Security Joint Government-Donor Policy Dialogue Group, and a Food Security Technical Secretariat. The Steering Committee will focus on strategy, while the Dialogue Group and Technical Secretariat will cover operations and monitoring, respectively. According to Shaiban, these structures will more effectively coordinate financial and technical support for food security from the ROYG as well as donors such as the World Bank, UN World Food Program (WFP), and USAID's Office of Food for

Peace, amongst others. (Note: The proposed food security work structures will effectively take the place of the now defunct National Food Council, which has suspended operation since early 2008. End Note.)

ROYG TAKES ACTION TO GUARANTEE FOOD SAFETY

14. In addition to food security, food safety appears to be rising on the ROYG's agenda, as the ROYG adopts international standards for monitoring products in Yemen. Ahmed A. Y. Al-Bashah, General Director of the Yemen Standardization, Metrology, and Quality Control Organization, told EconOff on August 1 that his organization is ramping up efforts to monitor imports, exports, and products for national consumption. He also claimed that his organization is actively searching for and destroying foods on the economy that have expired, and is attempting to do so in a manner that is environmentally sound. There are increased reports, which appear to confirm that the ROYG is taking action to seize expired or rotten products. On June 14, the ROYG-sponsored Almotamar.net reported that the ROYG seized five tons of expired goods in Sana'a markets. On July 1, the official Sabanews.net reported that the Yemen Standardization, Metrology & Quality Control Organization confiscated 1160 cartons of rotten chocolate.

COMMENT

15. While new efforts towards establishing food security and safety are a start, the ROYG must expand its approach to

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include major challenges such as growing water scarcity, rapid population growth, changing agricultural and ecological conditions, food trade imbalances, and the ever-increasing use of qat. To be comprehensive, the ROYG's emerging National Food Security Strategy must also confront and address these challenges. END COMMENT.
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